

VIVA MAY DAY!

OWS unites with immigrants & working class

By Teresa Gutierrez
New York

Imagine being in Dallas on what seems to be a normal day. But the city is empty. There is hardly anyone in the streets, offices, apartments or restaurants. No cars, trucks or taxis are moving.

It sounds like the opening of the latest disaster movie.

But this unfortunately conveys the reality of what has happened to the immigrant community in the U.S. today.

More than 1 million workers have been deported from the U.S. since the 2008 presidential election.

It's as though almost all of the city of Dallas, with a population of 1.2 million, had been emptied out.

The overwhelming reality that more than 1 million undocumented workers have been deported in this short period casts a gloomy shadow over the annual worker and immigrant May Day demonstrations in this country.

Every immigrant in this country has been touched by these massive deportations.

Add to that the racist and repressive anti-immigrant legislation that has swept the country, and the result is overwhelming terror directed by the capitalist system against this super-exploited sector of the working class.

This alone speaks to the importance of the May Day demonstrations taking place across the country.

Furthermore, the systemic racism and violence toward people of color, exemplified by the killing of Trayvon Martin, plus the ongoing and deepening crisis in jobs, housing and education, makes the need for workers and oppressed people to take to the streets on May Day even more decisive.

Welcome developments in New York

This is why developments in the organizing efforts for May Day in New York this year are so welcome. These developments also provide important lessons, many of which will require further analysis on May 2 and beyond.

Over the last several months, a grouping within the Occupy Wall Street movement has met hundreds of times to discuss getting involved with May Day. The discussions and deliberations in these meetings exemplify how much the events that erupted on Wall Street last September signify that a movement has been born in this country.

How long this movement will last and where it will go remain to be seen.

But a movement of primarily young people has definitely

Continued on page 4



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

RESIST RACISM & REPRESSION

- ▶ Trayvon Martin
- ▶ Lynne Stewart's letter
- ▶ Marissa Alexander
- ▶ Border Patrol atrocities
- ▶ Tarek Mehanna 6-7

5 DAYS FOR CUBAN 5

STOP WAR ON WOMEN 5



WW PHOTOS: MONICA MOOREHEAD AND BEN CARROLL

Close to 1,000 people from around the U.S. protested in front of the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. on April 24, the 58th birthday of political prisoner – Mumia Abu-Jamal – to demand his release. Following a rally and a march, 28 of those protesters were arrested in front of the White House. Read more in an upcoming WW issue.

STATEMENT OF WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Build solidarity vs. global 1%

What goes around, comes around. The class solidarity that unites workers of different national origins, skin colors, languages, genders, sexualities and abilities, in order to fight for their rights as human beings, is once again rising up.

Workers World especially wants to salute the youth, from Greece to Spain to the Occupy Wall Street movement here in the United States, who are resisting capitalist oppression with a new energy and fearlessness.

It was in this country that May Day started as a special time for workers to show their strength, share their struggles and shout out their aspirations.

May Day demonstrations began in Chicago 125 years ago to commemorate workers martyred by police during a rally at a place

called Haymarket Square. Then, in an act of international solidarity, a conference of socialists meeting in France in 1890 declared it the main holiday for workers around the world. May 1 became the day when millions of workers marched in the streets, arm in arm, to say no to exploitation. Socialists and communists were central to these demonstrations.

For too many years, however, it looked as though May Day had been forgotten by workers' organizations in the U.S. Especially with the beginning of the Cold War against the socialist countries, the 1% percent here did everything they could to bury May Day. They were afraid of its internationalism and its message of class struggle.

But the international day of workers' solidarity is back! And it

Continued on page 10

ACTION DEMANDS: FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Subscribe to Workers World

☐ 4 weeks trial \$4 ☐ 1 year subscription \$30

☐ Sign me up for the WWP Supporter Program.

For more information: workers.org/supporters/

212.627.2994

www.workers.org

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Workers World Newspaper 55 W. 17th St. #5C, NY, NY 10011

At DNC:

'March on Wall Street South'

By Ben Carroll
Charlotte, N.C.

From Sept. 1-6, poor and working people from across the world will march on the “Wall Street of the South” in Charlotte, N.C.

The Coalition to Protest at the Democratic National Convention held its national organizing conference April 14 in Charlotte to discuss action plans. Activists from throughout North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Detroit, Atlanta, New York City and Philadelphia discussed and adopted action plans for the first week in September.

The coalition represents more than 60 organizations from across the country, including organized labor, peace and anti-war groups, students and youth, immigrant rights organizations, Occupy groups and more.

Reports and updates were heard from members of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee; Committee to Stop FBI Repression; Coalition to March on the RNC; Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO; the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs; North Carolina Coalition Against Corporate Power; Occupy 4 Jobs Network; United 4 the Dream; Occupy groups throughout North Carolina and other states; and the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, among others.

Plans for actions take shape

The conference resolved to call a major March on Wall Street South demonstration on Sunday, Sept. 2. Charlotte is second only to New York City in the amount of finance capital concentrated in the city. It is home to the world headquarters of Bank of America and the eastern headquarters of Wells Fargo, two of the most notorious and hated institutions among the big banks because of the attacks they are making on our communities — with home foreclosures, student loan debt, funding the prison-industrial complex and more.

Other actions discussed and adopted for the week of Sept. 1-6 include a Southern Worker’s Assembly; a People’s Tribunal on the Banks; supporting Charlotte’s Labor Day march; and a Youth/Student “Education not Deportation” Festival. Occupy events and actions will also take place throughout the week.

Mayra Arteaga, an activist with the youth immigrant rights group United 4 the Dream, reported that “The conference went extremely well. There was a lot of support from other organizations to help us mobilize Latino/a youth and students to participate in the actions around the DNC, especially the ‘Education not Deportation’ fes-

tival, and to encourage us in our goals to get the word out about the need for education in this country.”

Organizers demand right to protest

The city of Charlotte still has not granted any protest permits despite the coalition’s efforts to secure permits for the past seven months. If the city does not grant them, the coalition will launch a major campaign to demand the city issue permits.

The coalition, along with leaders from organizations across the U.S., held a press conference at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte on April 13 to announce plans to march during the DNC and to again demand permits. Elena Everett, co-chair of the Legal and Permits working group of the coalition, said, “The rights of the people to present their demands for economic, social and political justice to the delegates of a major electoral party must not be curtailed by excessive delay tactics.”

“We won’t tolerate any effort to stop us from exercising our constitutional rights to protest,” said Larry Holmes, with Occupy 4 Jobs in New York. “If they have to arrest 10,000 of us, if we have to fill the jails ... we will be here.”

Reports from RNC organizing

A delegation from the Coalition to March on the RNC traveled from Florida to attend the conference and report on their organizing for protests during the Republican National Convention, to be held in Tampa from Aug. 27-30. Their coalition is also fighting the city of Tampa for permits to march on the opening day of the convention. The two coalitions are working closely together and building solidarity for demonstrations at the conventions of the two pro-war, pro-Wall-Street parties.

An organizer with the N.C. Coalition Against Corporate Power also gave an update on an upcoming major demonstration at Bank of America’s shareholders’ meeting on May 9 in Charlotte.

Next steps

Overall, the conference represented a big step forward in the work to build for demonstrations during the DNC and to sharpen the focus on the big banks and corporations that call Charlotte home.

Over the coming months, organizers with the coalition will be participating in many mobilizations across the country as well as conducting an organizing and outreach tour to help spread the word and engage a broader base around the Sept. 1-6 actions.

For more information and to find out how you can get involved, visit protestdnc.org, email info@protestdnc.org, or call 704-266-0362.

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

★ In the U.S.

OWS unites with immigrants & working class 1
'March on Wall Street South' 2
Anti-NATO protest sparks growing movement 3
BP oil spill, fracking cause wildlife abnormalities 3
Michigan workers protest Wisconsin's Walker 3
Remembering Paul Robeson, cultural warrior 4
Actions demand justice for low-paid workers 5
Students protest Israeli apartheid..... 5
'Unite Against the War on Women'. 5
Dr. Tarek Mehanna sentenced 6
Racist killings must be stopped 6
Lynne Stewart on Trayvon Martin 6
Trayvon Martin's parents, supporters 'devastated' 7
Free Marissa Alexander! 7
'5 Days for the Cuban 5' 9
Exhibit to feature Cuban 5 art..... 9
L.A. says 'Free the 5' 9
Guns, racist terror and self-defense 10

★ Around the world

Arab revolutionary Ahmed Ben Bella dies at 96 8
French election shows need for anti-fascist mobilization 8
Argentina nationalizes Spain-based oil monopoly..... 9
Struggle in China, Part 5 11

★ Editorials

WWP statement: Build solidarity vs. global 1% 1

★ Noticias En Español

Latinos/as por Trayvon Martin 12
La candidatura de AMLO 12

Workers World
55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 54, No. 17 • May 3, 2012
Closing date: April 24, 2012
Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead,
Gary Wilson
West Coast Editor: John Parker
Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe,
Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel,
Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash,
Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette,
Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac
Technical Staff: Sue Davis, Shelley Ettinger,
Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Michael Martínez,
Carlos Vargas
Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2011 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor,
New York, N.Y. 10011.

"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."
-Howard Zinn, author of
A People's History of the United States
Low-Wage Capitalism
Fred Goldstein
Colossus with feet of clay:
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

An easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle. The author is available for lectures & interviews.

For information about both books go to

www.LowWageCapitalism.com

Low-Wage Capitalism is available at Amazon & bookstores around the country

To order Capitalism at a Dead End, send \$12 to World View Forum, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., NY, NY 10011.

CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END
Job Destruction, Overproduction and CRISIS in the High-Tech Era
A MARXIST VIEW
FRED GOLDSTEIN
author of Low-Wage Capitalism
Just released

JOIN US

Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in struggles on all the issues that face the working class & oppressed peoples — Black & white, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women & men, young & old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented & students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 5565
Atlanta, GA 30307
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.909.8964
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
Fax 617.983.3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
331 W. Main St., Ste. 408
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
1905 Rodeo Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90018
la@workers.org
323.515.5870

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
619.692.0355
sandiego@workers.org

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco
CA 94103
415.738.4739
sf@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

May 20 in Chicago

Anti-NATO protest sparks growing movement

By John Catalinotto

A new generation of activists has grasped the central, repressive role of NATO on a world scale. They will join the protest in Chicago on May 20 against a NATO summit scheduled there. Their involvement in this and further actions will strengthen the movement against U.S./NATO wars of aggression.

In April, a broad layer of churches, peace organizations and labor unions endorsed the May 20 protests. They have also asked for “teach-in” type discussions to learn more about NATO and its role.

Workers World learned of these developments while speaking to some of the anti-war leaders organizing the Chicago protest. The United National Anti-War Coalition and the Coalition Against NATO/G8 War & Poverty Agenda (CANG8) were the first groups to call the protest.

“Something is happening with this protest that is really remarkable. The administration’s decision last year to hold a NATO military summit and a G8 economic summit in Chicago during the same week, even though they later reversed it, educated everyone by linking NATO and G8,” said Joe Iosbaker, a key CANG8 organizer.

“The new Occupy movement already saw the G8 Summit as representing the 1% richest people internationally. Now they see that NATO’s military agenda is set by the same superrich who set the G8’s economic agenda. Even after the administration pulled back and moved the G8 meeting to Camp David, many of the Midwest’s Occupy movements decided they would still focus their protest on Chicago and NATO.

“There are many reasons to oppose war,” continued Iosbaker. “People die, the money spent could be used for human needs, but many in the Occupy movement have grasped the most important reason: because NATO launches the war to protect the interests of the same 1% who are the enemy of the 99%.”

NATO threats against Syria

Sara Flounders, International Action Center co-director and an organizer of the May 20 action from New York, said Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s threats against Syria and the United Nations’ approval for observers there created “a new emergency.”

“It is urgent to protest NATO aggression,” said Flounders. “Clinton threat-

ened to increase sanctions. Now the U.N. has its foot in the door with so-called observers. This can be used, as it was last year in Libya, to open that door to NATO military intervention.”

Iosbaker said that UNAC and CANG8 had from the beginning opposed any NATO or U.S. military or other intervention against Syria. The Bush administration had included Syria in its “Axis of Evil” a decade ago. “The U.S. and Israel don’t want any government in place that speaks out against their military and economic domination in the region.”

Abayomi Azikiwe, an organizer with the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, said, “We in MECAWI are outraged about the NATO summit being held in Chicago. Both Chi-

cago and Detroit have been devastated by the world economic crisis that in part was caused by the enormous Pentagon and NATO war budgets. We will be in Chicago to express our solidarity with the other victims of NATO around the world, the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya.”

Burgeoning support

Iosbaker spoke of the protest’s growing support: “Rev. Jesse Jackson endorsed at an Occupy rally. The Chicago teachers’ union voted to endorse. First one, then all of the large Service Employees locals are supporting. The [United Electrical Workers] endorsed. We’re hoping to attract even more labor support.

“We’re planning a press conference

with Jackson and other ministers. One invited us to a Town Hall meeting to educate the community. This church is in the shadow of the summit. Its board invited protesters to camp on the church’s lawn. There’s a snowball effect.”

The protesters have a permit from the Chicago authorities to march to the block of the NATO summit. “We still have to talk to the Secret Service,” said Iosbaker. “We have a meeting with them on April 24.”

The Chicago media have said that the planned protest caused the administration to move the G8 meeting to Camp David. The Occupy movement’s focus is now on May 20 in Chicago. That movement is still growing. The organizers are looking forward to a strong national protest, said Iosbaker. □

BP oil spill, fracking cause wildlife abnormalities

By Betsey Piette

The potential environmental hazards resulting from the oil and natural gas industry’s drive for super-profits are becoming increasingly apparent and alarming. The evidence is surfacing from the Gulf of Mexico, two years after the major BP oil spill, to the waters of the Susquehanna River, heavily impacted by a decade of Marcellus Shale fracking.

Fishers off the Gulf Coast have reported that up to 50 percent of grouper and red snapper caught have large open sores, strange black streaks and lesions never seen before. Scientists studying deep-sea coral reefs in the path of the 5 million barrels of drifting oil released during the April 2010 explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform found “widespread signs of stress,” according to a report published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. (Philadelphia Inquirer, April 20)

The scientists found much of the coral was covered with oil from the spill. Temple University biologist Eric Cordes noted the coral was in “an ongoing process of death. ... [W]e could see that everywhere they had been covered, the tissue was either gone or completely degraded.”

Questions remain as to how extensive the damage to the deep-sea coral is and

what other species have been impacted by the spill. Dolphins in the area are showing symptoms of lung and liver disease and are underweight and anemic. More than 75 percent of 8,366 birds collected by researchers since the spill were dead or died during rehabilitation.

Commercial fishers are finding horribly mutated shrimp with tumors on their heads. Some lack eyes and even eye sockets. Fishers also report finding clawless crabs “with shells that look like they’ve been burned off by chemicals.” At least 1.9 million gallons of the toxic dispersant Corexit was used to control the BP spill. (Aljazeera.com, April 18)

The amount of seafood caught in the Gulf of Mexico, which normally provides more than 40 percent of all seafood caught in the continental U.S., is also significantly lower than before the spill. Scientists are concerned that the BP spill killed off large numbers of killifish, a marsh fish that serves as a food source for larger fish.

Dr. Jim Cowan of Louisiana State University cites chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), used experimentally by BP to disperse the massive April 2010 oil spill, as the likely cause of the abnormalities in fish and other wildlife. PAHs are known to be mutagenic, carcinogenic and teratogenic — able to disturb the growth and devel-

opment of an embryo or fetus.

The BP oil spill also threatens the livelihoods of a number of small Indigenous fishing communities, like Bayou Pointe-au-Chien on Louisiana’s Gulf Coast, whose members have historically fished the coastal waters. Even before the 2010 spill, canals built by the oil companies to access wells caused flooding in these towns from coastal erosion.

Louisiana state officials continue to maintain that their seafood is safe. Gov. Bobby Jindal, who has been described as “an enabler of the oil industry,” stated, “Gulf seafood has consistently tested lower than the safety thresholds established by the [Food and Drug Administration] for the levels of oil and dispersant contamination that would pose a risk to human health.” (Aljazeera, April 18)

Marcellus Shale fracking waste water

Studies of aquatic life in feeder streams leading to the Susquehanna River — ground zero for Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling — are also reporting disturbing findings.

A survey conducted by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission showed 40 percent of adult small-mouth bass with in a section of the river had uncommon black spots and lesions.

Concerned over these spots and incidents of intersexing in the fish studied, FBC Executive Director John Arway formally requested in an April 4 letter that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection list the Susquehanna River as “impaired” under the Clean Water Act. The request was rejected April 17 by DEP Secretary Michael Krancer, who has been described by Food & Water Watch, Pennsylvania as a “notorious defender of fracking.”

Over 15 water treatment plants in Pennsylvania had been accepting frack waste water, laced with brine and toxic chemicals, and dumping it into rivers and streams. In November 2008, the Sunbury, Pa., Generation plant, just upstream from an area where black-spotted fish have since been found, was authorized to treat up to 80,000 gallons of gas-drilling waste fluids daily until operation was suspended in April 2011. Treated waste water from Sunbury and one other plant was discharged into the Susquehanna River. □

Michigan workers protest Wisconsin’s Walker

Several thousand Detroit-area workers picketed along a busy, suburban, eight-lane boulevard during afternoon rush hour on April 17 to protest Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker. Walker’s union-busting and anti-worker schemes caused a people’s uprising in that state beginning in February 2011. The Troy, Mich., Republican fundraiser featuring Walker angered Michigan workers, who are also under severe attack. Hundreds of members of the United Auto Workers, Michigan Education Association and dozens of other unions joined the demonstration, along with activists from Good Jobs Now, Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, and other progressive and community organizations.

— Report & photo by Kris Hamel



Remembering Paul Robeson, cultural warrior



Paul Robeson was born on April 9, 1898, and lived until 1976. This article appears in its entirety at workers.org and is excerpted here.

By Dolores Cox

Paul Robeson was one of the most popular entertainers in the United States. Yet, he was unfortunate enough to become a persona non grata, a victim of McCarthyism. During the Harlem Renaissance era, Robeson emerged as a singer and stage and screen actor. His 1924 performance in “All God’s Children Got Wings” was the first time a Black performer had a main role alongside a white actress. Robeson performed “The Emperor Jones” both on stage and in film. He fought against stereotyped film roles and cherished his role in the 1939 film “Proud Valley” about the struggle of Welsh coal miners. In the 1940s, Robeson’s “Othello” set an all-time record for Shakespeare’s plays on

the Broadway stage, with 296 performances. It brought him international fame. He was the first African American to interpret the role on a U.S. stage. Robeson advocated for equal rights for African Americans. His activism in the 1930s and during World War II centered on U.S. racial apartheid, the lynching of Blacks and racist discrimination in Major League Baseball and elsewhere. He joined other activists on workers’ picket lines and protests at the White House and was elected vice president of the Civil Rights Congress. As an “artist,” Robeson was a spokesperson for freedom, equality, anti-fascism, colonial liberation and peace. He sang at many concerts for the Spanish anti-fascist Republican cause.

Robeson visited the Soviet Union because of its stated rejection of racial prejudice. Like many artists during the Great Depression, he was attracted to socialism. The Soviet Union awarded him a top international peace prize in 1952. Target of anti-communist campaign Robeson was the first to integrate USO (United Service Organizations) shows for troops in Europe. Yet, while he was receiving tributes to his artistry and for contributions to the war effort, the U.S. government began secret surveillance of him and then persecuted him for many years. The FBI fabricated evidence of his membership in the Communist Party while searching for proof of subversion. Continued on page 5

OWS unites with immigrants & working class

Continued from page 1

occurred. At its core is the desire to break with everything that Wall Street represents. It is a very anti-capitalist movement. While the Occupy Wall Street May Day grouping is not at all homogeneous, in the end one voice resonated the strongest. That voice was wonderfully oriented to the working class. It did not want to make mistakes with immigrants, especially the undocumented, who the OWSers recognized had revived May Day nationally in this country in 2006. It was not easy, it was painful, and it was frustrating. It was and is fraught with contradictions and shortcomings. But in the end all roads led to a united May Day in New York. At each turn, the OWS May Day grouping was open to decisions made by those who had been organizing annual May Day marches, even if that was not their first instinct to do so. In early January, for example, a rich discussion took place on the call for a general strike for May Day. Many in the immigrant rights movement, such as those represented by the views of the May 1st Coalition for Worker & Immigrant Rights, would politically like to call for a general strike. Who could not desire that workers hold back their labor in light of the attacks on the working class here and around the world? But did the correct and appropriate conditions exist? Would workers come out in a massive way, or would the “general strike” be just a tiny grouping of activists and a few workers? In the end most agreed that the call for a general strike needed genuine teeth to

make it a reality and was not appropriate in New York in the current climate. Another discussion was around permits. OWS feels strongly about not applying for permits, an honorable position. Other organizers expressed their responsibility for representing a vulnerable population that, should there be a confrontation, would not just spend the night in jail but could be deported. Organizers from labor and immigrant rights groups explained that we could not consciously put the undocumented in harm’s way. This should not be interpreted to mean that immigrants are fearful or not militant. But it was clear that this was more an issue of privilege, especially by white youth. That swayed the OWSers to agree to apply for permits. What is of note in this entire process is the question: Can the unity and rich working relationship that has been established by sectors in the labor, immigrant and OWS movements strengthen and grow? Is it possible to build on these relationships to take the class struggle further in this country? Can the anger and disgust against the capitalist system shown by youth in the OWS movement expand and broaden to become a bigger threat to the ruling class? All this remains to be seen.

What’s needed to threaten the 1%

One of the outstanding limitations of the Occupy Wall Street May Day grouping in New York City has been in terms of representation. The vast majority of the people in the meetings have been white. New York is overwhelmingly a Brown and Black city. New York is a city of the oppressed.



Teresa Gutierrez, front center, at NYC protest for Trayvon Martin.

WW PHOTO BRENDA RYAN

In order for a movement to really expand, be successful and become a real threat to the 1%, it must get the issue of racism correctly. Solidarity and unity with oppressed people is not just important. It is decisive, especially in the belly of the imperialist beast. What could frighten and threaten the 1% more than youth who hate capitalism and are Black, Brown, Asian and white? There is one thing that would threaten them a bit more. And that is when those multinational youth are in unison with the working class. This is why it is a welcome development that this year in New York sectors from the labor movement prevented there being two separate May Day demonstrations. The rank and file and others in the unions have pushed enough so that even the Central Labor Council of the city has endorsed the Union Square May Day rally, which has been hosted by members of the May 1st Coalition since 2005. It was in fact the slogan put forth by one of the OWS youth — originally from Bolivia — that many unions rallied around. That slogan is: “Legalize, organize and unionize.”

This slogan, if implemented in a massive and real way, could be extremely important in advancing issues for the entire working class in this country. The question on the table — the elephant in the room — is: Can the unity and solidarity galvanized for May Day 2012 take another big step forward after May 1? Which way will that unity go? Will it be derailed into the dead end of the 2012 elections? Will it dissipate, or will it take a Woodstock turn? Or can an element stay united to wage a real fightback against capitalism? The only way that undocumented workers can win legalization is if the movement continues to be united, in the streets and militant. The only way that U.S.-born workers can end the rising unemployment and stop the banks from foreclosing on their homes, the only way young workers can cancel their student debt or go on to college, the only way we can stop racist and police terror — is if we remain in the streets, independent from those tied to the capitalist system. Gutierrez is a member of the Secretariat of Workers World Party.

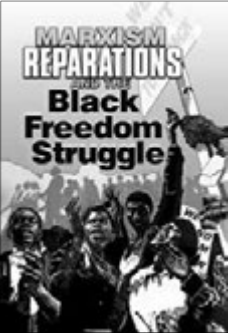
MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.

Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

- Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes
- Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy
- Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell
- The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead
- Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights and Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad
- Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation Consuela Lee
- Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal
- Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker
- Racism & Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales
- Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions Pat Chin

Available at Amazon.com and bookstores around the country www.workers.org/reparations/



COVER GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

NEW YORK CITY

Actions demand justice for low-paid workers

By Sue Davis

Two groups of low-paid workers, many of whom are immigrant women, stood up for their rights in New York City on April 19.

The Laundry Workers Center United held a lunch-hour protest at the midtown office of the private equity firm Praesidian Capital, which is headed by Mark Sampson, who owns the Hot and Crusty food chain. Joined by Occupy Wall Street activists and immigrant and labor supporters, LWCU is demanding the reinstatement of Gretel Areco, a Hot and Crusty worker who was sexually harassed and fired because of her organizing efforts.

Sampson has refused to recognize the workers’ newly formed labor organization, the Hot and Crusty Workers Asso-

ciation, and has terminated negotiations until the workers, many of whom are immigrants, stop their public campaign. That began on Jan. 21 with a brief occupation of a Hot and Crusty shop. Demonstrators issued Sampson a letter with their demands, and vowed that the company must either respect the rights of the workers or “we’ll be back.”

Domestic Workers United held an early evening demonstration at the midtown offices of Shade Global. This is an advertising agency run by Sheryl Shade, the former employer of nanny Patricia Francois. In 2008 Francois, who is a Black immigrant from Trinidad, was physically assaulted while trying to protect the little girl she cared for from her father’s verbal abuse.

According to a DWU statement, when Francois tried to call the police, Matthew

Mazar punched the domestic worker in the face and injured her hand while screaming racist, sexist insults at her. Ever since, Francois has been locked in litigation with Shade and Mazar. While they enjoy a swanky 1% lifestyle, Francois has gone without work while bravely battling breast cancer.

DWU, the National Domestic Workers Alliance, OWS activists and other allies rallied to demand respect and justice for Francois, who has fought tirelessly for the rights of nannies, housekeepers and elderly caregivers as a DWU member. Protesters chanted slogans like “We’re gonna beat back the Mazar attack,” “Get up, stand up, fight back” and “Free, free domestic workers, end the slavery!” To sign a petition demanding justice for Francois, visit <http://tinyurl.com/848hrce>. □

PHILADELPHIA

Students protest Israeli apartheid

By Michael Ladson
Philadelphia

On April 16, Temple University Students for Justice in Palestine erected a mock “apartheid wall” to represent the actual barrier cutting through the West Bank in occupied Palestine. The wall was ruled illegal by the U.N. International Court of Justice in 2004.

The students’ mock wall, covered with information about the occupation of Palestine, was visible in the middle of the campus. SJP maintained the protest throughout the day.

Most of those who encountered the wall were unaware of the Israeli occupation. They also did not know that U.S. aid to support Israel has been \$3 billion a year since 1985 — more than to any other country. This comes at a time when many workers cannot find jobs and students are saddled with mountains of debt.

Most of the day passed with minimal harassment until suddenly a pro-Israel mob attempted to disrupt the wall demonstration with the jingoistic chant of “USA,



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

USA, USA.” To that, SJP activists countered by adding, “Out of the Middle East!”

Within a day of the wall demonstration, a student group associated with Zionist David Horowitz announced that

it was planning a “conference” at Temple featuring anti-Islamic bigots Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller. Anti-racist students and community activists are mobilizing to resist this outrage. □

APRIL 28

‘Unite Against the War on Women’

By Sue Davis

Little did Karen Teagarden and Desiree Jordan know when they issued a call on Facebook on Feb. 19 that they would be initiating a new grassroots phase of the ongoing movement for women’s equality and justice.

But that’s what their call to “Unite Against the War on Women” on April 28 is generating. In little over two months, their social media-based organizing has inspired women in 48 states to call marches and rallies at state capitals and other major U.S. cities. Though women in Mississippi and North Dakota have not yet responded, three events are planned in both Florida and Washington state and women in West Virginia are joining the “closest event.”

While the attacks on reproductive rights so infuriated Teagarden and Jor-

dan that they were compelled to call for a national mobilization, they realize that so many wrongs need to be righted. According to their home page statement: “UniteWomen.org strongly supports diversity and welcomes men and women of all ages without regard to their race, color, creed, political affiliation, disability, religious or spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, education or income level, marital status, employment status, or immigrant status. Everyone is invited to join, plan, and rally as we unite to demand that every person be granted equal opportunities, equal rights, and equal representation.”

The national endorsement list is growing. In addition to groups like the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Code Pink and the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, young women are adding their voices through groups like Advo-

cates for Youth and Rock the Slut Vote.

On April 17, the Equal Pay Day, 9to5: National Association of Working Women endorsed. As a unitewomen.org press release noted, 9to5’s “efforts have resulted in the greater awareness to the challenges that working women face every day, including persistent job and pay inequities, workplace discrimination, lack of support for women and men to accommodate their parental care responsibilities, and increased efforts by unions to organize working women.”

‘Time to stand up’ for women

The National Organization for Women issued a statement April 20 in support of the grassroots movement: “This is a time to stand up for women’s equality, dignity and the right to make personal health decisions. ... Attacks are coming from every direction and on every issue we

care about, including reproductive rights, health care, equal pay, violence against women, and the list goes on.”

While actions in most states are focused on state capitals, in Illinois women are rallying at Lincoln Park in Chicago, in Detroit at Roosevelt Park and in New York City at the site of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire. Of the 146 people who died in that horrific workplace tragedy, most were young immigrant women, and the rights of immigrant women must still be fought for today.

“We wanted to start at the Triangle site because those women died to help us get our rights,” Teagarden told Workers World. “We want to show that they didn’t die for nothing — that we honor their sacrifice as we fight for the rights of all women today.”

To find the April 28 event in your state, visit unitewomen.org. □

MAY DAY 2012: UNITE TO FIGHT

Supporters rally as

Dr. Tarek Mehanna sentenced

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Supporters packed the courtroom and overflow auditorium as Dr. Tarek Mehanna was sentenced on April 12 to 17 ½ years in prison for the “crime” of holding and expressing the belief that oppressed people have the right of self-defense against occupation — even if the occupying force is the United States. Mehanna is one of hundreds of Muslims who have been framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government since 9/11.

Mehanna addressed the court and gave a stirring affirmation of his solidarity with all the oppressed. He explained that he would never have been brought to trial had he agreed to inform on the Muslim community.

“Throughout history there has been a constant struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed,” stated Mehanna. “And with each struggle I learned about, I found myself consistently siding

with the oppressed and consistently siding with those that defend them. ... I learned about Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, John Brown, and the fight against slavery in this country. I learned about Emma Goldman, Eugene Debs, and the struggles of the labor unions, working class, and poor.

“I learned about Anne Frank, the Nazis, and how they persecuted minorities and imprisoned dissidents. I learned about Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and the Civil Rights struggle. I learned about Ho Chi Minh, and how the Vietnamese fought for decades to liberate themselves from one invader after another. I learned about Nelson Mandela and the fight against apartheid in South Africa. ...

“With each struggle I learned about, I found myself consistently siding with the oppressed, and consistently respecting those who stepped up to defend them — regardless of nationality, regardless of religion. ... This trial was not about my position on Muslims killing American civilians. It was about my position on

Americans killing Muslim civilians, which is that Muslims should defend their lands from foreign invaders. This is what I believe. It’s what I’ve always believed, and what I will always believe. This is not terrorism, and it’s not extremism. It’s the simple logic of self-defense.”

Following the sentencing, Mehanna’s family condemned the unfairness of the trial and the sentence. They affirmed how proud they were of Mehanna’s unwavering courage and position in solidarity with the oppressed.

Supporters rallied outside the courthouse and rededicated themselves to the ongoing fight against the dismantling of the Constitution and to their continuing solidarity with Dr. Mehanna as well as



Aafia Siddiqi, Ziyad Yaghi, Omar Khadr, the Newburgh Four, the Fort Dix Five and the countless other Muslims being persecuted by FBI frame-ups and “preemptive prosecutions.” Supporters pledged to continue the fight through Mehanna’s appeals process, which is already underway.

To read Dr. Mehanna’s statement in full, visit FreeTarek.com.

Tased to death by Border Patrol

Racist killings must be stopped



By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

Anastasio Hernandez-Rojas was killed in California by Border Patrol agents in May 2010 when he reentered the U.S. from Mexico after having been deported by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The 42-year-old father of five was returning to be with his family when he was seized by Border Patrol agents.

PBS aired a recently uncovered video of Hernandez-Rojas being tortured and beaten on its “Need to Know” show April 20 entitled “Crossing the Line at the Border.” The horrifying video, taken by an eye-witness who was crossing the border, shows close to 20 Border Patrol agents participating in the beating and tasing of Hernandez-Rojas.

It has been two years since the death of Hernandez-Rojas at the hands of the U.S. Border Patrol, and there have been no arrests. The Department of Homeland

Security will not even release the names of the agents involved.

In a similar incident, Carlos de La Madrid of Douglas, Ariz., was killed by Border Patrol agents in March 2011. Nineteen-year-old de La Madrid was shot in the back and left to die. His family is still demanding justice, having been denied the autopsy report and the names of the agents involved in their son’s murder.

These two examples of the impunity of the Border Patrol show how deeply racism is embedded in all the police agencies of the state. Whether it’s the Sheriff’s Department, the FBI, the local cops or the Border Patrol, they all exist solely to repress the masses of people. Like the U.S./NATO armies of occupation that crawl the globe protecting the interests of the super-rich, these armies at home occupy and terrorize our communities. A movement based on unity and solidarity can push them out of our communities once and for all. ☐



Thousands in Baltimore come out against racism, March 26

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

LYNNE STEWART

On the killing of Trayvon

Lynne Stewart, 72, activist and “people’s lawyer,” is imprisoned at Carswell Federal Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas. She was convicted in 2005 of distributing press releases for a jailed client, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman. Originally sentenced to 28 months incarceration, a federal judge upped her term to 10 years. Stewart, who has had breast cancer, entered prison in November 2009. No decision has been issued in her February appeal. Stewart wrote this statement with her partner, Ralph Poynter, another decades-long activist. It appears in full at workers.org and is excerpted here.



WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

I start out with an apology to Trayvon’s mother who is bearing a burden no mother should ever have — the sudden, violent death of her child. But I respectfully disagree when she states that this is not a “white and Black thing.” It is just the latest in a long series of Black and white “things” that have been happening ever since the first Black person was ripped from all he knew and loved and transported unwillingly as a chattel slave from Africa to serve the Europeans (whites) in America.

The “things” I speak of are the victim-

ization and oppression of Blacks by whites who are certain that they face no punishment for the outrages they commit. Close to 400 years after the first crime against Black humanity — slavery — was committed, there is a direct connection to the murder of Trayvon Martin.

Repeatedly, we mourn for the victims of an unjust authority: police, neighborhood watch, KKK, Nightriders or just “everyday” white folks who know there is nothing to stop them. [I]n the [1983], the murder of [Michael Stewart] in [a] subway station by police, while [he was] “graffiti-ing,” was the horror and outrage of the day. So many have followed [that] I have lost track, but I can never forget Eleanor Bumpers in the Bronx, Alberta Spruill of Harlem and Ben Chaney in Mississippi.

Nor can I forget the mothers who fought for justice, including Margarita Rosario, whose son [Anthony Rosario], was ordered to the floor by two New York City detectives and then was shot at close range; and Juanita Young, whose son [Malcolm Ferguson], after protesting Amadou Diallo’s death, was murdered by New York police on a tenement stairway. [A] Bronx District Attorney called both murders “justifiable homicide.” In November 2011, in White Plains, a 68-year-old Black man with a heart condition [Kenneth Chamberlain Sr.], was shot dead in his own

GH T RACISM & REPRESSION

AS RACIST KILLER WALKS FREE

Trayvon Martin’s parents, supporters ‘devastated’

By Monica Moorehead

Having a “heavy heart” and being “devastated” were the main words that Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin used when the killer of their 17-year-old son, Trayvon Martin, was released on a \$150,000 bond from the Sanford, Fla., jail.

George Zimmerman — reportedly wearing a bulletproof vest under his jacket — was videotaped as he was escorted out of jail by rifle-toting police in a car caravan in the early morning hours of April 23. He only had to put \$15,000 down in bail money. Trayvon Martin’s parents were hoping, like many others, that Zimmerman would remain in jail until his trial begins. As of April 23, no date has been set for the trial.

At his bond hearing on April 20, Zimmerman publicly “apologized” to Martin’s parents. Lawyers for the parents stated that the so-called apology was “self-serving” and “insulting.” (cnn.com, April 23) The prosecutor had sought a \$1 million bond.

Zimmerman’s release came only 12 days after Florida authorities were forced to arrest and charge him with second-degree murder of the unarmed African-American teenager on Feb. 26 in a gated community in Sanford. That arrest only happened because of mass protests around the U.S. that mushroomed for at least three weeks, especially by outraged Black youth demanding that Zimmerman be charged.

Martin, who lived in Miami, was visiting his father in Sanford when his young life was tragically cut short. Zimmerman stalked the youth as he was returning to his father’s home from a store with a can of iced tea and a bag of candy. Zimmerman,

a neighborhood watch volunteer, was armed with a 9-mm gun. He called 911 and claimed that Martin looked “suspicious” because the youth was wearing a hoodie.

On that 911 call, Zimmerman was told by the police not to pursue Martin, but he ignored them. Martin can be heard begging for help before Zimmerman shot him in the chest at point-blank range.

Racist police vs. youth of color

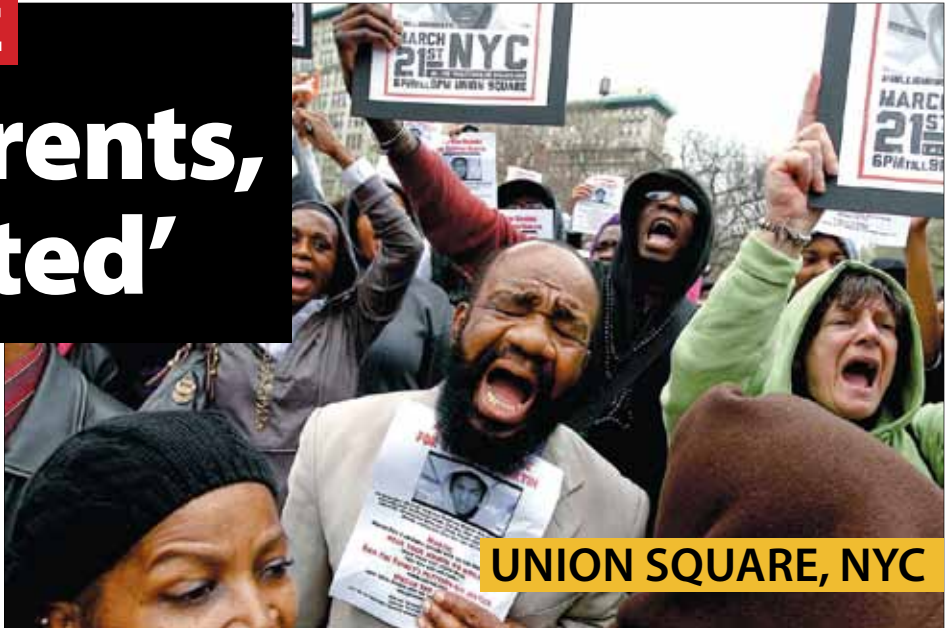
The police refused to arrest Zimmerman when they took him in for questioning, once Zimmerman invoked the “Stand Your Ground” law, which allegedly upholds the right to self-defense. Zimmerman claimed that he suffered a bloody nose and head injuries at the hand of Martin. Police videotape showed no signs of any injuries when Zimmerman was brought in for questioning.

Zimmerman has a known history of making 911 calls complaining about Black teenagers. A restraining order was imposed on him by a woman for alleged physical abuse.

Many have raised serious doubts that, had the roles been reversed, Martin would have been given treatment similar to Zimmerman. If Martin had shot and killed a white person invoking the same law, would he have been allowed to remain free for 45 days straight?



Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton



UNION SQUARE, NYC

Sanford, especially its police department, has a heinous history of racist contempt for the Black community. Bill Lee, the Sanford police chief who temporarily resigned from his post when he came under initial criticism for his mishandling of the Martin case, officially resigned on April 23.

The release of Zimmerman is just another phase in the ongoing struggle to win justice for Trayvon Martin and his family. Short-term justice will only happen if Zimmerman is found guilty and put be-

hind bars for the rest of his life. A conviction for second-degree murder carries a minimum sentence of 25 years in prison and a maximum term of life in prison with no chance of parole.

Long-term justice involves ending all racial profiling of youth of color like Martin by the police or racist vigilantes like Zimmerman.

April 26 has been designated another “Hoodie Day” of actions in honor of Trayvon Martin. □

Another injustice in Florida

Free Marissa Alexander!

By Monica Moorehead

Marissa Alexander is a young African-American mother in Jacksonville, Fla., who was arrested in August 2010 for defending herself against her abusive, estranged spouse. At the time of her arrest she had just given birth to her third child. Angela Corey, the special prosecutor assigned to the Trayvon Martin murder case, is seeking a 20-year prison sentence for Alexander.

Corey’s actions in this case completely ignore Florida’s “Stand Your Ground” law that supposedly justifies the right to self-defense — including taking someone’s life — for anyone who feels he or she will be harmed by anyone in any way. This is the same law that the Sanford, Fla., police allowed George Zimmerman to use to remain free for 45 days after he shot and killed unarmed, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin on Feb. 26.

Once Zimmerman claimed that he felt “threatened” by a “suspicious” looking Martin, who was wearing a hoodie, the police refused to even arrest him. It was only after a massive, sustained outcry of protests throughout the U.S. that Corey was forced on April 11 to arrest Zimmerman, who was then freed on bail on April 23.

Alexander defended herself against a violent attack on Aug. 1, 2010, by her estranged spouse, but she is now facing many years in prison as the alleged assailant. It didn’t seem to matter to the prosecutor that she had an order of protection against her spouse and that she only fired a warning shot in her own home to scare him off.

Alexander’s case is an important example of the double standard that African Americans, in this case particularly African-American women, face in defending themselves against attack, including domestic violence. It makes clear that the so-called Stand Your Ground laws — which exist in many states — are really only designed to protect white male gun owners.



Marissa Alexander

An open letter by Alexander, written on April 3 in consultation with her lawyer, states in part:

“On August 1, 2010, my premature baby girl, born nine days earlier, was in the Baptist South N.I.C.U. fighting for her life and I would too be fighting for my life in my own home against an attack from my husband. I am a mother of three children, but at the present time, I am not able to be with them due to the following circumstances. I am currently sitting in the Pre-trial Detention Facility in Jacksonville, Fla., Duval County awaiting a sentence for three counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon with no intent to harm. ...

“I am a law-abiding citizen and I take great pride in my liberty, rights, and privileges as one. I have vehemently proclaimed my innocence and my actions that day. The enigma I face since that fateful day I was charged [and throughout the] trial: Does the law cover and apply to me too? A step further and more importantly is in light of recent news: [Does] justice for all include everyone, regardless of gender, race or aristocratic dichotomies? I simply want my story heard, reviewed, and the egregious way in which my case was handled from start to finish serve as an eye-opener for all and especially those responsible for upholding judicial affairs.”

To read the entire letter, sign the national petition to demand Alexander’s freedom, and find out how to get involved in this struggle for justice, go to justiceformarissa.blogspot.com. □

on Martin



Ralph Poynter speaks at a rally for Lynne Stewart.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

home by local police for no reason.

The “Stolen Lives” [Killed by Law Enforcement] project now numbers thousands of murdered persons, mostly young, almost all of color.

[I]n the words of Fannie Lou Hamer [I] am “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” We are always the victims. There was a brief but golden period when brave Black men took upon themselves the protection of the community and let it be known that they would respond in self-defense to anyone who was an aggressor to the people. Then the number of racial murders decreased.

[M]any of these Black heroes are in the oppressors’ prisons suffering long sentences on trumped-up charges with little or no chance of coming home to the community

they attempted to protect. Were Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X wrong when they spoke of the need for self-defense?

[I]t is particularly sickening that [George] Zimmerman invoked [self-] defense against [Trayvon Martin], an unarmed teenager, who posed no physical danger to him. Were the situation reversed, we all know who would be in the deepest cell awaiting a possible death penalty.

[I]n this America, schoolchildren, Black and white, recite “with liberty and justice for all,” when the reality is the opposite. Only a resolute, proud and emboldened Black community can throw off these chains of fear and oppression and assertively stand up to an unjust system. □

Arab revolutionary Ahmed Ben Bella dies at 96

By Joyce Chediac

Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president of independent Algeria, and one of the great revolutionary figures of Arab nationalism, died on April 11 at the age of 96.

In the worldwide upsurge of colonial peoples that marked the 1950s and 1960s, few uprisings had as much prestige and so electrified the world’s poor as the Algerian people’s 8-year armed struggle, which defeated French colonialism. Ben Bella’s government was seen as a symbol of internationalist solidarity, providing political support and also military training to freedom fighters in Latin America and Africa. He even invited African-American leader Malcolm X to join his government.

Ben Bella is also known for his leading role in the Pan-African and Non-Aligned Movements, and for bringing Algeria into the United Nations as an independent nation. While working very closely with socialist countries, and acknowledging their contributions to governments newly emerging from direct colonial control, Algeria did not aspire to implement socialism or break with the capitalist economic system.

Ben Bella served more than 24 years in prison. He was imprisoned by both the French colonial regime and the Algerian government that followed his. He remained active and outspoken all his life. At the time of his death he chaired the African Union’s advisory group in charge of conflict prevention.

The truth about French colonialism

Imperialists claim that though the colonial period was harsh, it brought development to “backward” lands. This is pure myth. When France seized Algeria in 1830 the education level there was higher than in France itself. (“Modern Algeria, the Origins and Development of a Nation” by John Ruedy)

But that soon changed. In the 130 years

of occupation, Paris dismantled Algerian social and economic life and left the country impoverished. Algeria was declared “part of France,” as 1.5 million French settlers took over the best lands, controlling farming and trade.

Led by the National Liberation Front, from 1954 to 1962, the entire Algerian population rose up, fighting heavily armed French troops with sticks, stones, homemade bombs and any weapons they could get.

France deployed a half-million troops against the people’s uprising. They bombed and strafed whole villages, leaving 3 million homeless. The French interred 2 million Algerians in concentration camps. By the time the French conceded defeat, some 1 million Algerians, or approximately 15 percent of the population, had been killed by the French.

This carnage didn’t stop the worldwide imperialist press from siding with the French. The corporate media raised a racist frenzy against the Algerian liberation movement. This slander of the struggle of the oppressed continues today. The April 12 New York Times obituary of Ben Bella describes the Algerian fight for national liberation as a “war of massacre and mutilation, summary executions and rape.”

Algerian people’s victory resonates in U.S.

Oppressed people around the world, however, were not fooled by the corporate media. They cheered the hard-won victory in Algeria as a beacon of hope. Coming from the African continent, it struck an especially strong chord among oppressed people in the United States.

A precipitant factor in the U.S. Civil Rights movement was the anger and frustration of African-American soldiers returning from World War II to Jim Crow racism. Similarly, soldiers from French colonies who fought to liberate France from Nazi occupation were enraged when the newly “liberated” France

tightened the screws on its colonies.

Ben Bella was part of a “colonial” (segregated) unit in the French army and a decorated soldier in World War II. However, in May 1945, as France celebrated Hitler’s defeat, French troops and settlers attacked Algerians protesting the cruelties of colonialism in the town of Setif. Thousands of Algerians were massacred. This was a turning point for Ben Bella, who left the French military and joined the national liberation fight.

Ben Bella was one of the nine members of the Committee of Algerian Revolutionaries that gave birth to the National Liberation Front. Arrested by the French occupiers in 1952, he escaped to Cairo, where a pan-Arab nationalist movement was on the rise under the government headed by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Arrested again in 1956, he was jailed until 1962.

In 1963 Ben Bella became the first elected president of independent Algeria. The new Algerian government inherited a country where the fleeing French settlers had razed fields, destroyed food supplies, hospitals, factories and machinery.

Ben Bella began a sweeping land reform program. He called for elected workers to run the country’s farms and factories. The new government was strongly anti-imperialist, offering support to Cuba, Palestine, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Vietnam — all countries under the heaviest siege by imperialism.

Class character of new Algerian government

In Cuba, Vietnam and China the struggle had been led by a seasoned revolutionary working-class party that eliminated capitalism and imperialism root and branch, making a definitive break with the old order and embracing socialism. The fight in Algeria, in contrast, was led by a coalition of dedicated intellectuals based in the middle class. They shared no consistent ideology, and were divided

into different organizations with sharp differences on how to govern after independence.

Many of these groups were against moving in a socialist direction. Others were alienated from the socialist camp because it did not support the Algerian liberation struggle until it was victorious. While the French Communist Party gave programmatic support for Algerian independence after 1958, its actions fell far short of its potential. Meanwhile the pressure from world imperialism on the new government remained relentless.

Ben Bella proved to be Algeria’s most progressive head of state before he was deposed in a coup in 1965. Successive governments slowly but steadily adopted positions less confrontational to imperialism, eventually conciliating on many fronts.

Ben Bella was placed under surveillance until 1980, and then went into exile in Switzerland. He continued to speak out against imperialism and to advocate unity in the Muslim and Arab world. In 1990 he returned to Algeria, with tens of thousands of people giving him a hero’s welcome.

Ben Bella explains internationalist views

After Ben Bella died, many progressive media reprinted a 2006 interview the former leader of Algeria gave to writer Silvia Cattori. (www.salemnews.com, April 11) In it Ben Bella explains his internationalist views and comments on the current developments of that period. Excerpts follow:

“In Tunisia, in Morocco, in Vietnam, Algeria had become somewhat like the ‘mother of freedom struggles,’ to support them was thus for us a sacred mark. When someone came to ask us for help, it was sacred. We helped them, even if we had only meager means; we offered them arms, a little bit of money, and on occasion, men.”

With the participation of Che Guevara, who came to Algeria, “all the combatants who participated in the fight for freedom in South America came to Algeria; it’s from there that all those who fought left. We trained them, we arranged for the weapons to reach them, we created networks. Mr. Mandela and Mr. Amilcar Cabral themselves came to Algeria. It’s me who coached them; afterwards they returned to lead the fight for freedom in their countries.

“I am not a Marxist, but I place myself resolutely at the left. I am a Muslim Arab, in my actions oriented very much to the left, in my convictions. That is why, even if I don’t share the Marxist doctrine, I always found myself on the side of all the leftist movements in the world and Socialist countries like Cuba, China, the USSR that have led the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist fights. It’s with them that we have constituted a liberation front and brought our logistic support to armies to help their countries come out of colonialism and establish a national internal regime.”

Regarding the current period, he said, “I myself, speaking as a man of the South, note that something has changed in the North. There are young people who say ‘enough.’ This perverse global system does not strike only the South but also the North.

“In the past we spoke of poverty, misery only in the South. Now there is a lot of misery in the North as well. This has become manifest: the global system was not made to serve the good of all, but to serve the multinational corporations. Thus, deep from within this North there is now a movement, there is an entire generation of youth who want to act, who go out onto the streets, who protest.” □

'5 Days for the Cuban 5' demands: FREE THEM NOW!

By Cheryl LaBash
Washington, D.C.

The "5 Days for the Cuban 5 in Washington, D.C." are over, but its broad and unified call to the Obama administration continues to echo: Open the U.S. prison doors and return Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero and Rene González to their Cuban homeland.

Because the U.S. government failed to curb terrorist actions aimed at Cuba, the five Cuban security agents infiltrated the Florida-based paramilitary organizations that bombed Cuban hotels during the 1990s. Unlike other unregistered foreign agents who are expelled or sentenced to short prison terms, a Miami court slammed the Cuban 5 with prison terms exceeding sentencing guidelines. Although eventually reduced, they were still incredibly long prison terms — especially for Hernández, who received two life terms plus 15 years.

The April 17-21 initiative by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 sparked events in 45 countries. Representatives from Belgium, Germany, Italy and Canada assisted on-the-ground organizing in Washington.

The project followed the Organization of American States summit, which highlighted the waning U.S. influence over Latin America and growing pressure to normalize relations with socialist Cuba. Colombia, the staunchest U.S. ally in the region, announced it would not attend another international meeting if Cuba was excluded. Brazil, with the largest economy in South America, announced the same decision.

In 2011 — for the 20th consecutive time — the United Nations General Assembly, in an overwhelming vote, told the U.S. to end its blockade of Cuba. A major obstacle to improved relations between the U.S. and Cuba is the unjust imprisonment of the five Cuban men, who are rightly regarded as heroes in Cuba and around the world.

Meetings, events demand 'Free the 5'

For the first time, meetings were requested with U.S. senators and representatives or their staff to discuss the Cuban 5. An original one-day schedule grew to two and a half days of meetings.

Saul Landau's video "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up" was screened at the University of Maryland, College Park and Howard University. At Howard, professor and author Piero Gleijeses



Protesters outside White House demand release of Cuban 5.

PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE CUBAN 5

discussed Cuba's role in Angola during the war that defeated apartheid in South Africa. Three of the Cuban 5 were among Cuba's international combatants.

A panel hosted by Wayne Smith, former chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, discussed Stephen Kimber's new book, "What Lies Across the Water," to be published in 2013. Kimber read the entire trial transcript along with researching background to the 1998 arrest of the Cuban 5. The chapter of his book titled "Shootdown" is available on Amazon. Arturo Lopez-Levy, a Jewish Cuban and lecturer at the University of Denver, commented on Kimber's book and U.S.-Cuba relations.

Takoma Park, Md., a community adjacent to Washington, inaugurated a new committee to free the Cuban 5. Chilean singer Ismael Duran drove from Detroit to perform there.

A crowd packed the Festival Center on April 20 for a public meeting featuring Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farmworkers Union, and noted actor and activist Danny Glover. The panelists addressed the case of the Cuban 5, as well as the many additional obstacles blocking normalized U.S.-Cuba relations.

Univision's 11 p.m. lead story that night was about the event, which helped to chip away at the corporate-owned media's boycott of coverage. WECT radio broadcast the program live. Telesur, RT and AP-TV also covered the event. Both this event and the closing one were streamed live, and can be viewed at justin.tv/cubae-nwashington/videos.

Picketing the White House

Several hundred picketers filled the sidewalk at the White House on April 21, demanding the immediate release of the Cuban 5, followed by a rally on Pennsylvania Avenue. Participants from

New York City came in four buses and marched to the picket line chanting. They included members of Casa de Las Americas; American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 372; Cuba Solidarity NY; the International Action Center; and Iranian, Puerto Rican and many more activists in support of Cuba.

The rally, chaired by Alicia Jrapko from the International Committee, heard speakers from the IAC, Answer Coalition and the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, as well as Dick Gregory, Bob Brown, Salim Lamrani, Cindy Sheehan and many more. The protest only ended in time so activists could travel to the "5 Days" closing program.

A meeting of religious leaders earlier on April 21, with Rev. Dora Arce-Valentin of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba, planned projects to expand the work begun by the National Council of the Churches of Christ (U.S.A.) with the Council of Churches of Cuba and by the recent visit of Pope Benedict to Cuba.

The closing cultural event at the Bolivarian Salon at the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela featured peace and justice activist Cindy Sheehan. Tears flowed during the children's performance of Obi Egbuna Jr.'s play, "Cuba's Greatest Weapon: A Tribute to Cuban Doctors." The cultural event was closed by Canadian artistic director Brian Gordan, who performed his one-man show, "Hemingway's HOT Havana on Stage!"

To see photos of the events and activists, visit theCuban5.org or "like" the Facebook page "Five days for the Cuban 5."

Editor's note: LaBash, along with International Committee organizer Nancy Kohn, worked on the events in Washington, D.C., including publicity and outreach, from April 1 through the completion of the "5 Days for the Cuban 5" on April 21.

Exhibit to feature Cuban 5 art

Milwaukee

Gerardo Hernández is one of the Cuban 5 unjustly imprisoned in the U.S. On May 4 at 7 p.m., at the Dominion Gallery in Milwaukee, the opening of Hernández's "Humor from My Pen" art exhibit will begin with various events, speakers and film.

The gallery, located in the multinational Riverwest neighborhood, will feature the exhibit through May. Alicia Jrapko, of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5, will be the featured speaker at the gallery on May 18. The Dominion Gallery is at 804 East Wright St. in Mil-



waukee; 414-581-0978. Hours: Tues.-Fri., 3-8 p.m.; Sat., 2-6 p.m.; Sundays closed; Mondays by appointment only. Pictured here, front to back, are members of the exhibit committee: Larry "Spike" Bandy, Auriea Mosley and Stonie Rivera.

— Report & photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

Argentina nationalizes Spain-based oil monopoly

By Gene Clancy

When Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner abruptly left the Summit of the Americas (Cuba was pointedly excluded), it was reportedly to protest lack of unanimous support for her country's claim to the British-controlled Malvinas Islands.

On April 16, President Kirchner revealed another reason she returned to Buenos Aires: to announce the nationalization of the Argentine oil and gas company, YPF, whose majority stakeholder is the Spanish-based energy monopoly, Repsol.

The international corporate media greeted Kirchner's decision to renationalize YPF with outrage, threats, forecasts of ruin and much name calling. Such ranting has all been heard before.

When Argentina repudiated its foreign debt at the end of 2001 and then devalued its currency a few weeks later, those actions were met with doom mongering in the corporate media.

However, between 2002 and 2011, Argentina's real gross domestic product grew by about 90 percent, the fastest in the hemisphere. Employment is now at record levels, and both poverty and extreme poverty have been reduced by two-thirds. Social spending, adjusted for inflation, has nearly tripled. Kirchner was reelected last October in a landslide victory.

Of course this side of Argentina's story is rarely told, mostly because it involved reversing many of the policies backed by Washington and the International Monetary Fund — which brought the country to ruin in its worst recession of 1998-2002.

Argentina is far from being a socialist country. Its government is not even considered leftist. This latest action is simply the reestablishment of what had been the national oil company of Argentina since 1920. Under International Monetary Fund pressure, the Argentine government sold off YPF in the 1990s. Now it

Continued on page 11

L.A. says 'Free the 5'

The International Action Center displayed a huge banner from 8 to 10 a.m. during rush-hour traffic on the 101 Freeway in downtown Los Angeles on April 20 and at the CNN building in Hollywood from 4:45 to 7 p.m. later that day. The actions were in solidarity with the five Cuban anti-terrorists unjustly imprisoned in the U.S.

These actions were part of the national and international effort to stand up to "The Empire's" attempts to make the Cuban 5 invisible, while discouraging unity with political prisoners in the U.S. Local actions like these, however, which are coordinated nationwide and around the world, will be



WW PHOTO: SCOTT SCHEFFER

the force that bends the prison bars forever. That is the battle of ideas that Fidel speaks about. Unity for justice will free the Cuban 5 and help save all political prisoners in the United States.

— Aracely Espinosa

Statement of Workers World Party

Build solidarity vs. global 1%

Continued from page 1

was revived largely by African-American and immigrant workers, who have been hit hardest by the capitalist class and its repressive institutions.

Black and Brown workers lead comeback

In 2005, the first significant May Day demonstration in years took place in New York City. The main force was the Million Worker March movement, led by Black labor unionists.

The next year was amazing. A million immigrant workers, mostly Latinos/as and many of them undocumented, bravely took to the streets across the country on May 1 to oppose legislation that would treat them like criminals just for trying to find employment.

Thus, it has been people of color — the most oppressed who suffer every day from racist violence and indignities — who have spearheaded the revival of working-class consciousness in the U.S.

White workers in places like Wisconsin have since then shown they, too, understand that solidarity with their oppressed sisters and brothers is crucial to the fightback against the bosses’ offensive. Youth of all backgrounds are also showing imagination and courage in fighting the rule of the 1%, whose hammerlock on society’s wealth is represented by Wall Street.

This year for the first time, unions, immigrants and militant youth energized by the Occupy Wall Street movement are rallying and marching together on May Day in New York. Other May Day actions across the U.S. will reflect this new alignment of forces.

Such solidarity is needed now more than ever.

Global capitalist crisis

The capitalist system is in a deep crisis with no way out. The highly efficient, global network of high-tech production that now exists cannot serve the needs of the people because it is shackled by the profit motive and private ownership. Instead of making our lives better and our work lighter, the growth of high technology is leading to high unemployment in every capitalist country and a drive by the bosses to force wages and benefits down to the lowest levels possible. This profits-before-people system is also doing great damage to the whole planet.

With production stagnating and tax revenues declining, capitalist governments in the name of “austerity” have unleashed a massive assault on all programs meant to alleviate poverty, homelessness, lack of health care and

education, just when workers need them more than ever.

This is accompanied by an assault on Black and Brown youth, highlighted by the Trayvon Martin killing, which in effect is criminalizing their very existence. Thus the youth, burdened with debt and blighted futures under this rotten system, are also in the forefront of the struggle.

It’s a war on the entire working class — and workers are fighting back

Combining theory and practice

Workers World Party has been fighting capitalism for more than five decades. The Party has studied Marx, Lenin and other great revolutionary thinkers and organizers for their keen insight into this system and how to overcome it. There is no blueprint for breaking the bonds of class oppression, but there is a wealth of experience to be gained from studying the revolutionary history of the working class and then applying those lessons to the living struggle.

What we have learned in our half century of organizing a party of revolutionary thinkers/fighters in this country can be briefly summarized as follows:

It is only the independent, militant action of the workers themselves — not the capitalist elections or either of the parties of big business — that can push back the bosses’ offensive.

The working class has the power not only to win concessions but to actually shut down capitalism. To begin to express that power, unity is essential, based on fighting racism, the scapegoating of immigrants, and the oppression of women and lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people.

So is international solidarity. Capitalism has grown into a world system that super-exploits the formerly colonized peoples. The violence of imperialist wars and interventions is the most vicious expression of the need of the 1% to crush any resistance to their domination. A strong workers’ movement needs to build solidarity with oppressed countries trying to resist imperialism.

These are necessary conditions to building a movement that not only can smash the grip of corporate capitalism but can replace it with something infinitely better: a socialist society run by the workers that, with today’s high level of productivity, can easily provide everyone with jobs, education, health care, housing and recreation as a human right, and plan production in a way that enriches rather than degrades our planet. It can be done. It will be done.

Long live May Day! The best is yet to come. □

A revolutionary youth’s perspective

Guns, racist terror and self-defense

By Caleb T. Maupin

In New York City, it is illegal to carry a firearm, whether a handgun or sporting rifle, without a permit. With this ban as an excuse, the New York City Police Department carries out a policy of “stop and frisk” that is aimed primarily at youth of color.

The police, for no legal reason, frequently stop Black and Latino/a youth and pat them down under the guise of hoping to find illicit weapons. The justifications given for these degrading “stop and frisks” are outrageous, such as “a suspicious bulge” or “furtive motions.” As a coalition of mostly young Black activists fighting this policy put it, the real reason is almost always nothing more than “walking while Black.”

Recently, Ramarley Graham was walking home in the Bronx. He was stopped by police, but rather than be searched, he escaped. In response, the police stalked him and fatally shot him in his apartment.

There is a group of “gun rights” activists who call themselves the Second Amendment Movement, referring to the part of the U.S. Constitution that guarantees the right of the people to bear arms. However, they are not involved in the struggle against “stop and frisk.” Nor can they be found among those who have been part of the heroic civil disobedience campaigns and protests aimed at this repressive policy.

This right-wing movement instead campaigns for capitalist politicians, rails against communism and now champions the racist killer George Zimmerman.

They and the rest of the gun lobby are sponsored by firearms manufacturers and the military-industrial complex. The aim of these forces is not to protect oppressed people from the repressive capitalist state, but to protect and reinforce the racists and vigilantes who terrorize oppressed people.

In addition, these groups whip up racist stereotypes and fear of crime in order to sell more of their products. They promote this vile racism, resulting in more senseless killings.

Does this mean that a ban on firearms

would be a good thing? No! A ban on firearms would be a setback for the workers and oppressed peoples of the U.S.

Right to self-defense

Racist murderers like George Zimmerman and his racist ilk in the Ku Klux Klan and other neofascist vigilante groups will always be able to obtain weapons. Their allies in the police departments, the FBI and other organs of the state will enable them to wage terror against oppressed people, whatever laws exist.

A ban on firearms would also not disarm the racist murderers in the police departments throughout the country. The Pentagon brass, the greatest collection of armed, warmongering profiteers, would remain armed to the teeth.

Marxist-Leninists unapologetically defend the right of workers and oppressed people to defend themselves with any means available. Historically, there have been many occasions in the people’s struggle for justice where guns have been utilized.

When civil rights activists were being murdered in the South, the Monroe, N.C., chapter of the NAACP, under the leadership of Robert F. Williams and Mae Mallory, beat back KKK terror in the 1960s through armed self-defense of their community. The Black Panther Party shook up the racist establishment when its young members patrolled Oakland, Calif., monitoring the activities of the police while carrying shotguns and law books.

During the Depression, when Nazis from the Silver Legion of America mobilized to attack the Teamsters in Minneapolis, the union, led by communists, formed workers’ defense guards. This caused the fascists to back down.

For years coal miners had to arm themselves against the violence of company goons trying to break their union.

As long as class oppression and racist violence exist, workers and oppressed people will need to defend their just struggles, sometimes with weapons in hand. It is a right that must not be surrendered.

The writer is a youth organizer in Workers World Party and FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together).

MUNDO OBRERO

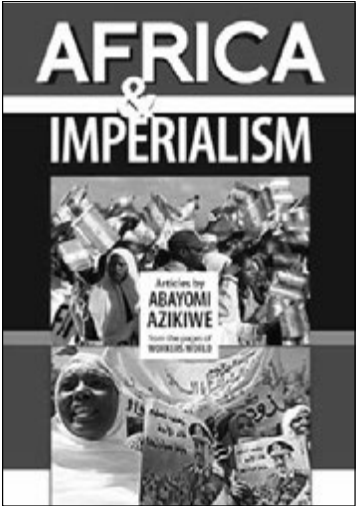
La candidatura presidencial de Andrés Manuel López Obrador

Continúa de página 12

medios de comunicación masiva, los partidos oligárquicos y las corrientes liberal-progresistas y socialdemócratas, impide la participación de coaliciones independientes encabezadas por sujetos populares. En tales circunstancias se impone la construcción de una alianza con los partidos liberal-progresistas y socialdemócratas que comparten la candidatura presidencial de Andrés Manuel López Obrador y su movimiento político”. “Participaremos de manera decidida porque nos queda claro que en 2012 corremos el peligro de que el neoliberalismo se legitime por la vía electoral y desate una ofensiva aún más violenta y eficaz contra nosotros;

consume la privatización del petróleo y de todas la riquezas de la nación que hasta ahora han escapado de sus garras, gracias a la constante y combativa movilización popular”.

El 9 de abril conformaron la “Estructura ciudadana en apoyo a la candidatura de AMLO y por un proyecto alternativo de nación” manifestando que “La única posibilidad que, en la vía electoral, le puede permitir a la izquierda política y revolucionaria impulsar un proyecto social es la candidatura de Andrés Manuel López Obrador a la presidencia de la República, por lo que es necesario en este momento coyuntural agrupar todas las fuerzas en torno a dicha candidatura”. □



AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

Articles by Abayomi Azikiwe from the pages of Workers World

- Africa struggles against imperialism
- WikiLeaks on U.S. role in Africa
- Tunisian masses rebel
- South African workers strike
- Famine in the Sahel
- Women at forefront of liberation struggles
- Africa increases trade with China

Order from Workers World 55 W. 17 St., 5C, NY, NY 10011
Enclose \$2 (plus \$1 shipping) for each pamphlet

Struggle in China, Part 5

The Wenzhou pilot program

After Bo's ouster, capital takes another step forward

By Fred Goldstein

The campaign in China to discredit Bo Xilai has reached a new crescendo. Every newspaper, television and radio station in the country has carried official statements and editorials attacking Bo and repeating the charge that he is under investigation for unspecified “serious disciplinary violations.”

The factions in the Chinese Communist Party leadership that are in charge of this campaign are afraid to attack Bo for his progressive policies when, as party secretary for the megacity of Chongqing, he tried to reduce inequality, built low-cost housing for workers, allowed peasants to move to the cities, and promoted “socialist values” and the singing of “red songs” of the Cultural Revolution era.

Ironically, Bo's case has become the occasion for a national campaign against corruption, implying that corruption and Bo are somehow linked.

In fact, Bo initiated a powerful campaign in Chongqing against corrupt government officials and business people as well as party officials and the criminal underworld. Prior to Bo's ouster, his campaign drew much support throughout China, which is rife with corrupt officials.

Numerous officials close to Bo are also under investigation as the campaign of vilification and intimidation reaches greater and greater heights. This can only signify fear of support for Bo and a determination to stamp it out.

Wen: Break the ‘monopoly’ of state banks

Meanwhile, another sequence of events has unfolded, culminating in the approval of the so-called “Wenzhou pilot program.” This sheds light on the underlying political issues in the factional struggle.

On March 15, Premier Wen Jiabao made a public attack directed at Bo: “Reforms have reached a critical stage. Without the success of political reforms, economic reforms cannot be carried out. The results of what we have achieved may be lost. A historical tragedy like the Cultural Revolution may occur again. Each party member and cadre should feel a sense of urgency.” The following day it was announced that Bo had been removed from all his posts.

Wen has been a leader of the right wing in

the Chinese Communist Party leadership. He has pushed for bourgeois-style political reform and for deepening and widening the role of the capitalist market in China.

On March 28, Wen presided over a State Council executive meeting that approved moving forward with the legalization of private capital lending to businesses in the city of Wenzhou, a practice that had been illegal. (xinhuanet.com, April 5) Up to that point, the right to extend commercial loans in Wenzhou had been restricted to state-owned banks.

Wenzhou is a manufacturing and commercial coastal city of 3 million, with a metropolitan area of 9 million. It has been a key center of the development of capitalism in China since the beginning of the introduction of so-called “market socialism” in the late 1970s under Deng Xiaoping.

According to the Jakarta Globe (online) of April 4, Wen declared over China National Radio that the country needed to break the “monopoly” of the state-owned banks.

“In regards to financing costs, let me honestly say that our banks are making a profit too easily. Why is this so? It's because a few big banks are in a monopoly position. Only when we approach these banks can we successfully get loans, if we go to other places it is very difficult.

“What we can now do to ease private capital flow into the financial system, fundamentally speaking, is to break this monopoly.”

The Indonesian newspaper commented that “China has seen an explosion in underground lending fueled by credit restrictions, raising concerns among top leaders about a surge in bad debts and defaults in the private sector.

“Independent business owners have had to borrow money at high interest rates from informal lenders after being rejected by major banks, who favor other state-controlled enterprises.”

Chinese private finance capital gets a major boost

The Wenzhou pilot program is a further breakthrough for private capitalists. It allows private capital to flow into the city. This private finance capital can be concentrated and grow. It will significantly enhance the accumulation of capital by

the bourgeoisie.

Private financing also weakens the control of the state banks over investment decisions and the allocation of national resources. The state banks operate on a commercial basis but are ultimately under the supervision and direction of the Communist Party, the government and the state planning apparatus. In this capacity they are able to lend according to national development policies and priorities, even when this lending conflicts with profit margins and the capitalist market.

Plans for the Wenzhou pilot program have languished in the State Council for a long time. The capitalists of Wenzhou were damaged by the world capitalist crisis of 2007-2008 and have been pushing for financing to recover and grow. According to the Beijing Review, “The idea of changing Wenzhou's financial environment first emerged in late 2011, and the long-awaited decision came as underground private financing activities in Wenzhou have stirred up financial disputes and crime while threatening Wenzhou's financial and economic stability.” (bjreview.com, April 16)

The discussion of the Wenzhou experiment actually goes back further than late 2011. It has obviously been the subject of internal struggle. In fact, at one point permission was granted for expanding foreign investment quotas for Wenzhou, but then was cancelled. But the important point is that it was only after Bo was pushed out and Wen and his faction had seized the initiative that this unleashing of private finance capital in Wenzhou was finally approved.

The Beijing Review continued: “According to the program, informal money-lenders will be encouraged to register as private lending institutions free to operate with the blessing of the state.

“The participation of private capital — in the form of setting up or taking shares of rural banks and credit companies — is encouraged and supported in the reform process. Eligible micro-finance companies could be transformed into rural banks. Private funds will also be guided toward the establishment of venture capital and private equity activities as well as other types of investment bodies. [Our emphasis — FG]

“The program points out the direction in which the private capital should be channeled. The registration requirement for private capital will turn underground private lending into formal lending above it,” said Zhang Yili, Vice Dean of the School of Business with Wenzhou University.

“The private lending industry in China was estimated to have grown to 4 trillion yuan (\$634 billion) last year, according to a research report issued by CITIC Securities based in Beijing.

“In Wenzhou the size of this industry was about 180 billion yuan (\$28.57 billion), with nearly 90 percent of the city's residents involved in the loan-shark business, according to the Bank of Wenzhou, the biggest local commercial bank.”

In essence, this means that loan-sharking is being legalized, giving free rein to almost \$30 billion in finance capital to operate on its own in Wenzhou.

World Bank and Wenzhou

The passage in the Beijing Review article referring to the establishment of venture capital and private equity firms is important to note. In the 450-page World Bank document entitled, “China 2030,” co-sponsored by the Development Research Center, an organ of the State Council, there is a strong recommendation to transform the

state banks, and part of that recommendation includes setting up exactly the same model of private finance capital as recommended in the Wenzhou program.

The document said: “A key advantage of capital markets relative to banks stems from the fact that multiple potential investors value business opportunities, which can help assess the viability of new technologies. Venture capital and private equity industries will have to play a bigger role in financing technologically advanced industries. [Our emphasis — FG]

Institutional investors will also play an increasingly important role in the development of China's capital market.” (“China 2030” by the World Bank and the Development Research Center of the State Council, People's Republic of China, p. 128)

Since the ouster of Bo, Wen and the State Council have been rushing to set up the very institutions recommended by the World Bank, which speaks for world finance capital.

In addition to setting up private financing to rival state banks, the “experiment” is going to raise the limit on foreign investment from \$50 million to \$200 million and expand the scope beyond state control. “The new policy stipulates that the maximum direct investment per year should not exceed 200 million USD for individual, and 1,000 million USD for multiple individuals in the same project. Investors can set up non-financial enterprise overseas through establishing, merging, or shareholding; they can also gain the ownership and management of the pre-existed non-financial enterprise overseas through the ways aforementioned.” (U.S.-China Policy Foundation, April 6, uscpf.org)

The Beijing Review quoted authorities who approved of the changes: “‘The reform will pull Wenzhou's real economy out of the predicament it now finds itself in and regain the reputation of Wenzhou's private enterprises,’ said Zheng Chen'ai, Director of Wenzhou Fashion Association.

“The government aims to test the waters through Wenzhou and then accumulate experience for the nationwide reform,” said Guo Tianyong, Director of the Research Center of China Banking Industry at the Central University of Finance and Economics.”

So Wenzhou was suffering from a capitalist crisis. There are close to 400,000 businesses there. Perhaps one-third of them are in crisis.

This crisis in the birthplace of Chinese capitalism under the post-Mao regime of “market socialism” is also a crisis for the working class of Wenzhou. Not a word about their crisis has been issued by the State Council. It is all about the flow of capital.

It is in this perspective that the struggle against Bo should be seen. He raised the slogan of “Red GDP,” meaning that development has to be achieved with concern for the workers and peasants. This slogan is a far cry from a demand for a full return to socialism. But from a class point of view, given the struggle in China, Bo's orientation is a reflection of the needs of the masses as opposed to Wen, whose outlook is a carbon copy of the program advanced by the World Bank and world capital.

To be continued.

Fred Goldstein is the author of “Low-Wage Capitalism” and “Capitalism at a Dead End.” More information is available at www.lowwagecapitalism.com and the author can be reached at fgoldstein@workers.org

Argentina nationalizes oil

Continued from page 9

has renationalized it and postponed payment to Repsol.

Why renationalization needed

There are practical, pressing reasons for the current renationalization. Writing in Spero News, Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic Policy and Research, points out that during the time Repsol owned 57 percent of YPF, Argentina's oil production has declined from 2004 to 2011 by almost 20 percent and its gas production by 13 percent. YPF accounted for much of this drop. Instead of developing the Argentine fields, Repsol preferred to invest in other, more profitable regions of the world. (April 19)

Weisbrot asks: “So why the outrage against Argentina's decision to take — through forced purchase — a controlling interest in what for most of the enterprise's history was the national oil company?” He notes that Mexico and many members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting

Countries don't even allow foreign investment in oil. “The privatisations of oil and gas in the 1990s were an aberration; neo-liberalism gone wild.”

Nevertheless, ranting against Argentina came from the European Union, of course from Spain and from the U.S. They're all complaining that nationalization is illegal — it isn't — that it damages confidence of investors, etc.

Kirchner says her aim is simply to recover her country's sovereignty. Argentina's population seems to agree, as do most Latin American left organizations. Cuba's Foreign Ministry issued a statement April 20 affirming that Argentina has the “right to exercise permanent sovereignty over all its natural resources.” (xinhua.com, April 20)

Crowds in Argentina turned out to cheer the move, including a group that briefly invaded a YPF plant in La Plata and replaced a Repsol flag with Argentina's. Then they stomped on the Spanish banner and drove a car over it for good measure. □

La candidatura presidencial de Andrés Manuel López Obrador en México

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El Seminario Internacional que bajo el lema “Los partidos y una nueva sociedad” el Partido del Trabajo de México celebra cada año, provee la oportunidad de discutir ampliamente los diversos análisis sobre la actual crisis económica y financiera y sus efectos, que traen los partidos y organizaciones de los muchos países que acuden. El XVI Seminario celebrado el mes pasado en el Distrito Federal, dio además la oportunidad de entrar en más detalle sobre la crítica situación actual de México. Andrés Manuel López Obrador, mejor conocido por AMLO, candidato de un frente electoral de izquierdas a la presidencia de la nación en las próximas elecciones de julio, fue invitado especial al Seminario al día siguiente de su proclamación oficial.

Por ser de sumo interés para el movimiento progresista de los EEUU que incluye a millones de trabajadores/as inmigrantes mexicanos/as, este artículo se centrará en la plataforma de AMLO y las organizaciones aliadas a su campaña.

Plataforma política de AMLO

El senador Alberto Anaya, líder del Partido del Trabajo (PT), presentó a López Obrador como el candidato único de las izquierdas mexicanas y candidato oficial del PT.

AMLO se dirigió a los/as asistentes al Seminario dando un breve resumen de las condiciones actuales del país donde destacó que “hay muchos problemas, mucha pobreza, desempleo, inseguridad, violencia, dolor y sufrimiento en la mayoría del pueblo por la falta de desarrollo y la corrupción imperante”. Lo cual hace que estas elecciones sean “trascendentales”, habiendo 4 candidatos, “pero solo dos proyectos”. “Dos hombres y una mujer”

dijo, “representan más de lo mismo, la continuidad del régimen y la corrupción, injusticia y privilegios. Nosotros representamos la opción de un cambio verdadero, de una transformación en todos los órdenes de la vida pública”.

La propuesta para esa transformación que es la base de su campaña electoral, se centra en 3 vertientes a las que llama Honestidad, Justicia y Amor.

Honestidad. “Porque nada ha dañado más a México que la deshonestidad, causa principal de la desigualdad social, económica y también la causa de la actual tragedia nacional, siendo un gran problema la corrupción”. Propone una agenda de austeridad contraria a la actual diciendo, “el presupuesto nacional es de tres billones, setecientos mil millones de pesos, pero la mayor parte se queda arriba, ... gastan un 61% del presupuesto en “gasto corriente”, sueldos elevadísimos para los funcionarios públicos”. “No puede haber gobierno rico con pueblo pobre”.

Justicia. Sobre esta dijo “Padecemos de una monstruosa desigualdad económica y social. Desde que vienen practicando la llamada política neoliberal, se ha acumulado dinero en pocas manos como nunca. Sin embargo, no ha habido desarrollo, ni siquiera en este periodo ha habido crecimiento económico. En 21 años la economía nacional ha crecido en una tasa promedio anual de 2.3% y si descontamos el aumento en la población, el resultado es cero crecimiento. Y si no hay crecimiento, no hay empleos, y si no hay empleos no hay bienestar, y si no hay bienestar, no puede haber paz y tranquilidad social”. “Los últimos 15 años solo se han generado 500,000 empleos anuales y se necesitan 1 millón 200 mil. Esto significa que 700,000 mejicanos cada año solo tienen 3 alternativas: [una es] irse a buscar la vida al otro lado de la frontera, a EEUU, esto nos convirtió en el país del mundo que más mano de obra exporta al extranjero”.

Sobre la reactivación de la economía habló de “un modelo propio” donde no se impondrán más privatizaciones. “Prácticamente se privatizó el estado, y desde hace 29 años se han aprobado reformas a la constitución y a las leyes para beneficiar a quienes son promotores de este modelo.” “Se ajustó el marco legal de lo que tiene que ver con la explotación minera desde el gobierno de Salinas [de Gortari] y se comenzaron a entregar concesiones para la explotación minera en el país. Actualmente, se han concesionado 50 millones de hectáreas del territorio nacional. Nuestro país tiene 200 millones de hectáreas. En 20 años han concesionado el 25% del territorio nacional”. “Se llevan el oro, la plata, el cobre y no pagan impuestos por la extracción de minerales. Entonces vamos a resolver este asunto”. Sobre la falta de pagos de impuestos por las grandes corporaciones dijo que “vamos a homogenizar la política fiscal para que se cobren impuestos iguales”.

“Estamos por eso pero también el estado debe rescatar a los que están actualmente en pobreza extrema. Plantemos dos cosas, que se reactive la economía para que haya empleos pero también que el estado cumpla con su responsabilidad social.” “Planteamos un proyecto de desarrollo social para sacar a los 15 millones de mexicanos de la pobreza extrema. Nadie en este país va a padecer por hambre o desnutrición”.

Sobre la violencia que vive el país mencionó que “no se va a resolver el problema de la inseguridad y la violencia nada más que con medidas coercitivas”. “Si creamos una atmósfera de progreso, de justicia, si atendemos a los jóvenes, a los que se les han cerrado las puertas, que no pueden tener ni trabajo y ni estudio. Si vamos casa por casa incorporando a los jóvenes al trabajo y al estudio, vamos a poder serenar al país”. “De los 60,000 asesinatos que han habido en los últimos años, la mayoría eran jóvenes. Por eso tenemos que atender las causas”. “Y desde luego, el no tener la corrupción va a ayudar; y también el que haya un gobierno eficiente, que haya coordinación, que el presidente se ocupe de atender todos los días este asunto, que tengamos una buena policía nacional, federal para ir sacando poco a poco el ejército de las calles”.

República amorosa. Se refiere a la necesidad de fortalecer los valores morales, espirituales y culturales.

Organización Política del Pueblo y los Trabajadores, OPT

Si bien el frente electoral que propulsa López Obrador está compuesto por el Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), el PT y el Movimiento Ciudadano, hay otras organizaciones lo suficientemente importante en el México actual que lo apoyan aunque actúan independientemente, y es imprescindible mencionarlas. Se destaca la Organización Política del Pueblo y los Trabajadores (OPT) conformada por un amplio sector del movimiento progresista mexicano, particularmente, por el valeroso Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas, SME.

La OPT se constituyó en el 2011 para la construcción de un instrumento político para la liberación de los/as trabajadores/as y el pueblo. Su lema es “Por la liberación nacional y la emancipación social”.

Su página web optmex.org dice “Somos dirigentes y activistas de la clase trabajadora, de comunidades indígenas y campesinas, de colectivos estudiantiles, de mujeres, de grupos religiosos, de organizaciones civiles, de minorías sexuales y de organizaciones revolucionarias de la izquierda mexicana, entre otras, que aspiramos a construir un nuevo liderazgo político”. “La Organización Política del Pueblo y los Trabajadores (OPT) es una organización partidaria de carácter nacional, independiente, incluyente y no lucrativa; un instrumento de los movimientos sociales, civiles, políticos y de las comunidades indígenas para disputar el gobierno y el poder a la oligarquía mexicana capitalista y al imperialismo”.

La Posición de la OPT ante la coyuntura electoral del 2012 es la siguiente: “En estos momentos no existen condiciones legales ni políticas para que los pueblos originarios, las clases trabajadoras y los movimientos civiles y sociales disputen el gobierno de forma directa. El monopolio de los procesos electorales ejercido por los

Continúa a página 10

Declaración de latinos/as por Trayvon Martin

La Solidaridad no puede ‘invisibilizarse’

El siguiente es un extracto de la declaración de Latinos/as por Trayvon Martin emitida en el Hostos Community College en el Bronx, N.Y., el 5 de abril.

Nosotros/as, Latinos/as por Trayvon Martin, una coalición de profesores, administradores y estudiantes de Hostos estamos reunidos/as [aquí] hoy porque la historia de esta institución latina exige que hablemos. Hostos Community College es un colegio nacido de la lucha de los/as latinos/as para la igualdad educativa y en contra del racismo estadounidense. Más de 40 años después de su fundación estamos llamados/as a denunciar una despreciable parodia de la justicia que ha llevado al asesinato de uno de nuestros hijos, uno de nuestros niños, Trayvon Martin.

Hacemos un llamado a la policía de Sanford, Florida, a la fiscalía del Condado Seminole y al Despacho del Fiscal Especial de Florida para que aceleren sus investigaciones y acusen a George Zimmerman con cargos criminales de homicidio. Si la aplicación de la ley de Florida no puede cumplir con su obligación hacia los ciudadanos de color, pedimos al Departamento de Justicia que enjuicie este incidente como una violación de los derechos civiles. También hacemos un llamado a todos/as los/as estadounidenses de buena fe para que se pongan en contacto con sus legisladores y apoyen la derogación de todas las leyes de “defender su posición” que actualmente están en vigor en 21 estados.

¿Alguien cree seriamente que si Trayvon hubiera sido un adolescente blanco asesinado por un asaltante negro, ese agresor estaría libre? La familia de Martin se ha comportado con nobleza, pero insistimos en que se detenga al depredador que mató a su hijo.

Se han enviado señales de que el terror al estilo vigilante es el llamado del día. Zimmerman debe ser detenido para que como nación tengamos un sentido de



finalidad a uno de los peores incidentes de violencia por motivos raciales en la historia reciente.

Nos preocupa el espectro de que algunos en los medios de comunicación han optado por centrarse en la cuestión irrelevante de que Zimmerman es latino debido a que su madre es peruana. Sin embargo, la cuestión relevante es si existe suficiente causa probable para acusarle por sus crímenes.

También estamos muy perturbados/as por lo que percibimos como un esfuerzo para dividir las comunidades negras y latinas al implicar que los/as latinos/as se han mantenido “silenciosos/as” sobre el asesinato de Trayvon. Sólo la semana pasada, muchos latinos/as se unieron con sus hermanos/as afroamericanos/as en una marcha de Selma a Montgomery, Alabama.

Recordamos a los medios de comunicación que declaraciones importantes ya han sido emitidas por el Consejo Nacional de La Raza, el Caucus Hispano del Congreso, el Instituto Nacional de Política de Latinos y muchos otros grupos, sin embargo, se han ignorado nuestras opiniones. No hemos estado silenciosos/as, sino nosotros que hemos sido invisibilizados/as.

¿América, estás escuchando?